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STROUD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, 1946

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting for your consideration the Annual Report for the year 1946, which in accordance with Circular 13/47 is an abridged one pending instructions to the contrary.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES. No epidemics of serious infectious diseases were recorded during the year.

SCARLET FEVER. Only 17 cases were notified as compared with 43 cases in 1945, and 114 in 1944. 6 of the cases were reported from a Private School.

DIPHTHERIA. 10 cases were notified as compared with 9 in 1945 and 4 in 1944. 3 of the cases notified were considered not to have the disease after further investigation. Of the 7 definite cases 3 were adults, one of whom died of the disease, and 4 children, two of whom had been immunised.

The Immunisation Scheme has been continued with success, both at the Schools and Welfare Centres, and at a Special Clinic in connection with the Infant Welfare Centre in Stroud. It is estimated that at the end of the year there were in the area 3652 children under 15 years of age, who had received an immunising course, giving an approximate percentage of 75% of children protected.

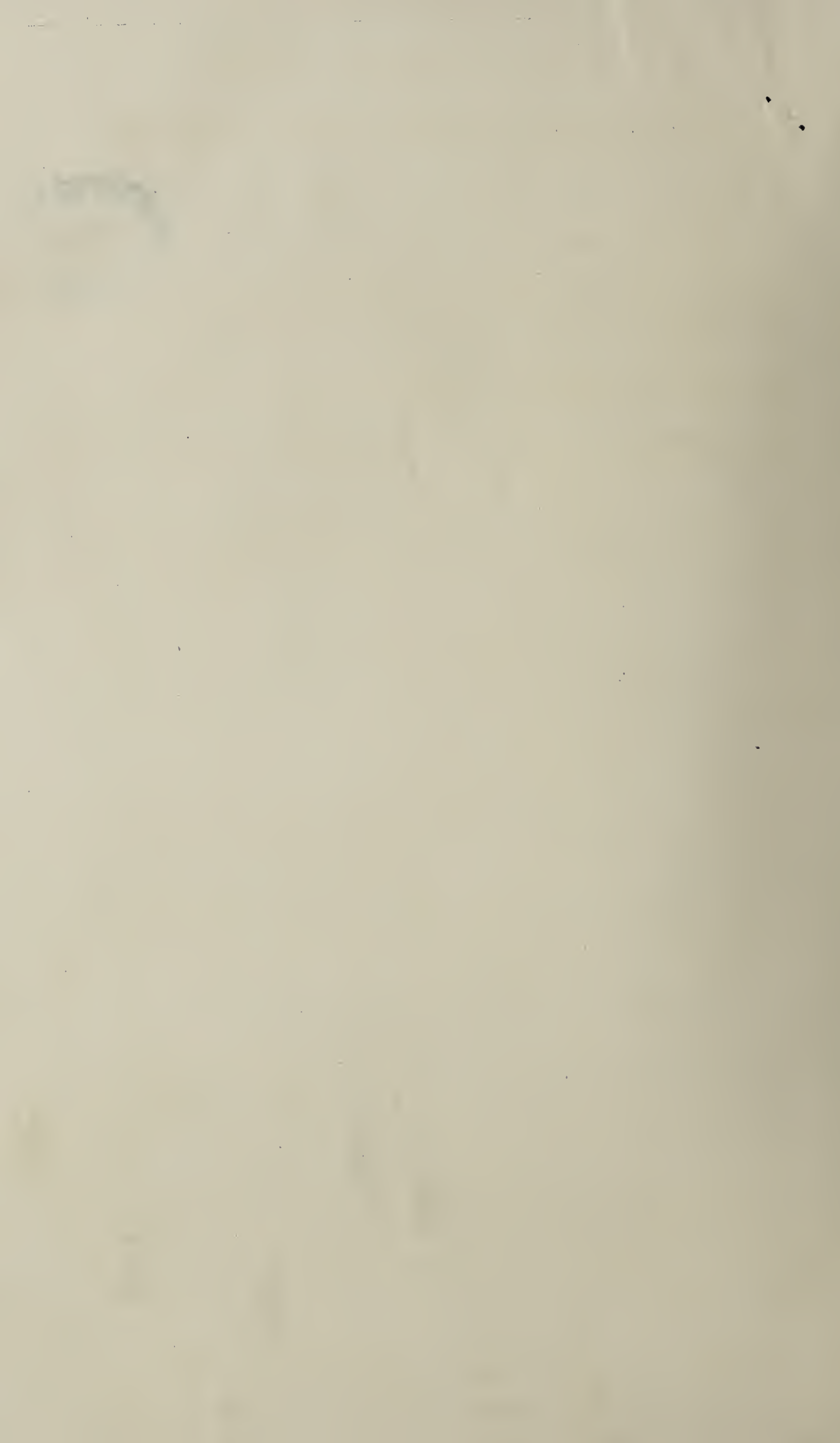
ENTERIC. One case of Typhoid Fever contracted abroad was notified, and one case of Para-typhoid contracted outside the district was brought to my notice. No cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever, Smallpox, Anthrax, Plague or Typhus were reported.

<u>Tuberculosis</u>	<u>Notifications</u>	<u>Death Rates (per million)</u>	
1939 - 22	1943 - 28	1939 - 448	1943 - 511
1940 - 23	1944 - 38	1940 - 595	1944 - 668
1941 - 21	1945 - 45	1941 - 441	1945 - 558
1942 - 24	1946 - 48	1942 - 386	1946 - 555

Of the 48 cases notified, 3 were Ex-service personnel belonging to the area. Of the remainder the notifications referred to persons resident in the following Parishes :- Stonehouse 8, Minchinhampton 8, Miserden 2, Cranham 2, Horsley 5, Painswick 5, Whiteshill 1, Bisley 2, Chalford 4, Rodborough 1, Woodchester 2, Thrupp 1, King's Stanley 3, Leonard Stanley 1.

It would appear improbable that the mortality and disability arising from this disease will be materially reduced until conditions have not only returned to normal following the period of strain imposed by six years of war, but until housing conditions have considerably improved, and a tubercle free milk can be made freely available either by the eradication of Tuberculosis from cattle, or the compulsory pasteurisation of milk in spite of trade opposition.

HOUSING. A considerable portion of the time of the Council has been devoted to the schemes for provision of houses for the working classes and they have plans for the erection of houses in practically every Parish. Unfortunately, however, there



have continued to be inevitable delays beyond their control, and only 10 houses (of the Swedish type) were completed and occupied during the year.

Large numbers of families in the area are living in houses quite unfit for human habitation, apart from those who are over-crowded or living with relatives, and from letters received it would seem that many families are suffering from strain, both mental and physical, the results of which may not be evident until later on. The need for thorough re-conditioning and modernisation of many other cottages is urgent, but there does not seem any immediate prospect of any extensive action in this direction in the immediate future. The provision of Health Services generally is largely nullified unless the people have a decent sanitary home to live in.

It is hoped, therefore, that apart from the provision of houses by the Council, they may be enabled to press ahead with the other powers they possess, or should possess, under the Housing and other Acts.

SEWERAGE. No start has yet been made with the Scheme for the main and internal sewers covering practically the whole district.

WATER SUPPLY. The water supplied by the Stroud Water Board continues to be of excellent quality and generally speaking sufficient in quantity. Schemes for the extension of the mains to various Parishes and hamlets have been considered and approved and it is hoped that a start will be made next year (1947).

The majority of the spring supplies to houses and cottages not on the main, are liable to pollution and the presence of B.Coli in very small quantities is often noted. It may not, however, be easy to persuade the country dwellers to avail themselves of a pure main supply when a clear sparkling and palatable water is ready at hand without charge, and has been drunk for generations by their forebears and themselves without harm or apparent harm. It needs an epidemic of the worst kind to aid progress in these matters.. Notices warning persons to boil polluted water from wayside public supplies are treated with scant respect.

As regards the main supply, regular samples are taken from the three sources and submitted for examination. 48 were taken last year, and with the exception of Minchinhampton Reservoir, B.Coli is absent in 100 ccs. in over 90% of samples. Chlorination is undertaken in addition. A sample taken 19/7/46 gave the following results:-

Total dissolved solids	52.2	(parts per
Combined Chlorine	1.4	100,000)
Nitrogen present as Nitrates.....	0.80	
Nitrogen present as Nitrites.....	absent	
Mineral ammonia	absent	
Organic ammonia	0.0012	
Oxygen required to oxidise the organic matter in three hours	0.013	
Temporary Hardness	22.5	
Permanent Hardness	4.0	
Total Hardness	26.5	

VITAL STATISTICS.

Birth Rate. 17.6 per 1,000 as compared with 18.1 per 1,000 last year. (19.1 per 1,000 E & W)

Death Rate. 12.1 per 1,000 as compared with 14.2 per 1,000 last year. (11.5 per 1,000 E & W)

Infantile mortality. 24.8 per 1,000 as compared with 41.7 per 1,000 last year. (43 per 1,000 E & W)

No deaths were recorded last year from Typhoid Fever, Cerebro Spinal Fever, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough, Measles, Diarrhoea and Enteritis. The only death from Diphtheria was in an adult. Evidence is accumulating that the drive for immunisation commenced by the Council in early 1940 is having a beneficial effect upon the School Population. Below I have indicated the principal causes of Death last year :-

Heart Diseases	105
Cancer	41
Intra-Cranial vascular lesions	36
Respiratory diseases	27
Kidney disease	14
Tuberculosis	Lungs 12) Other 2)
	14

From this brief review, I think we may say that, in spite of everything, the health of the District has been satisfactory during the year 1946.

There is no way, however, of properly assessing the wider conception of health and happiness which every person is entitled to in a normal world free from restrictions and petty annoyances. There is some justification for believing that all is not well, good housing, opportunities for free play and enjoyment, leisure, freedom from worry and the like, suitable education for all have not yet been obtained. The work, however, which the Council is carrying out is gradually helping the population to this end. It will be a long and arduous task.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council and the members of the Health Committee for their continued co-operation and support throughout the year, and for the assistance I have received from the Sanitary Inspectors and members of other Departments.

I have the Honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

June, 1947.

NICHOLAS D. DUNSCOMBE.

(Medical Officer of Health).

